

Newport Philatelic Society

Newsletter Spring Fourth Release: Number 63 April 2020

Introduction:

Dear members, we are living in incredible times, and here we are already at the fourth edition of Newport Society interim 2020 newsletter! During these past few weeks, and I strongly suspect the many more weeks to come, we are all experiencing a truly unique national response to the pandemic. The instructions to the population are clear, our key workers are amazing, fighting on our behalf, against extraordinary difficulties and I have seen, and helped in a small way, to the army of volunteers caring and assisting the vulnerable in our neighbourhoods and wider communities. My commiserations are also sent to everybody who has lost loved ones. The crisis has entered even our hobby as the scan below is taken from a letter I received with an EBay purchase a few days ago.



I have now put all of the three previous issues of the interim newsletter on our website. It is also worth reminding everyone that all of the previous standard newsletters from the first ever society issue are there and it makes for an interesting journey back through the society's history.

<https://newportgwentphilatelic.weebly.com/>

In this issue we have Neil's collecting story and a short article from Lynne on his new collecting theme of UK postmarks, I have also included some postmark definitions that many of you will already know but hopefully some new ones to help you describe your postmark collections. Please consider sharing how you started collecting and if you have a point of view or interesting snippet please send it to me and I will include it in a future issue.

Neil - A life in Stamp Collecting:



We are here grateful to Neil for sharing his early stamp collecting story. Neil's author picture shows him receiving a society trophy recognising another, high scoring, winning competition entry.

In August 1974 my son was born, and shortly afterwards a part of my life changed significantly. At the time money was not plentiful so my wife and I wondered what we could do for the lad's future. Why not invest in a stamp collection, which could be given to him at some future date, obviously having grown substantially in value?

Oh! The quaint naivety of youth.

Like most children both my wife and I had collected stamps in our youth, but those collections had long disappeared. We decided to visit the local Post Office and purchase the then current GB stamps. We did, and then stuck them in an album – hence ruining their value.

In October that same year we were invited to my manager's house for a dinner party. The conversation turned to stamps at some stage, and he mentioned that he had 2 spinster aunts who lived in New Zealand. They were frequently sending him NZ stamps, torn off envelopes. He went to a deep draw in the nearby cabinet, and it was full of stamps! Hundreds of them. A plastic bag was found from the kitchen and we left that evening with a sizeable NZ collection – the stamps just needed soaking off the paper.

Over the years our stamps from other countries more or less fell by the wayside, and my knowledge of NZ material steadily grew. Purchases were made from auctions and from dealers, magazines and books were eagerly devoured, and Societies were joined. In 1978 I and some friends set up the Wheatsheaf Society in IBM where we worked, and it thrived. One of the first members was Dr. John Horsey, now of County Auctions fame.

Gradually I learned more, and significant steps were made when I joined the NZ Society of GB, and the Royal Society in NZ. On to displays, competitions, and philatelic talks to other Societies. There is no end to the subject, and activity continues! One day my son, and now my daughter, may benefit from the collection, I do hope so.

A picture of some New Zealand Chalons.



A idea for a new collecting theme from Lynne;

Just a few lines on POSTMARKS, you either like or dislike them, but they tell you where and when the stamp was used and can tell you in some cases the route the mail took from sender to final destination. I was introduced to them by Martyn, not all that long ago, and fell in love with them. They are like golf, if you catch the bug it can be all consuming, but I just pick up lots and try to make a nice display of them. There are lots of reasons why we lost most of our village and town marks, mechanisation was one of them, the automatic sorting machine and the central sorting centres did most of the damage, but it's great looking for the old marks and it is not too expensive. The best part is that the older post used a post person for the cancellation (a hand stamp) on the stamp and the purists do not want the heavily cancelled stamps, so you can pick up lots of stamps at a reasonable price. In America, postmarks are often called Cancels or cancellation marks.



An example display page from Lynne showing the range of different available postmarks.

Postmarks History and Definitions:

Here are some details I have spotted, please feel free to correct or add more to the list. (Source Wikipedia and Google searches)

A postmark is a postal marking made on a letter, package, postcard or the like indicating the date and time that the item was delivered into the care of the postal service. Modern postmarks are often applied simultaneously with the cancellation or “killer” (see definition below) that marks the postage stamp(s) as having been used (though in some circumstances there may be a postmark without a killer, and sometimes the postmark and killer form a continuous design), and the two terms are often used interchangeably, if incorrectly.

Postmarks may be applied by hand or by machines, using methods such as rollers or inkjets, while digital postmarks are a recent innovation. Even a BIC biro/permanent marker is used sometimes, although currently the post person should use a wavy line hand stamp! The local post in Hawaii had a rubber-stamp postmark, parts of which were hand-painted. At Hideaway Island, Vanuatu, the Underwater Post Office has an embossed postmark.

In philately, a killer is a particularly heavy type of handstamp, or portion of one, consisting of heavy bars, cork impressions or other crude devices used to cancel postage stamps. Such handstamps may also be known as obliterators as the mark applied often obscures almost the whole of the stamp.

Killers (or obliterators) were most often used in the early days of stamps as the postal authorities wished to ensure that stamps could not be re-used.

In the United States this is also the name for a particular circular date stamp with four thick horizontal bars to the right. This handstamp effectively cancels the stamp while leaving the place and date information easily visible. The bars are known as killer bars.

There is no exact definition of what is, and is not, a killer cancel and the term is often used to apply to any heavy cancellation.

Coded postal obliterators are a type of postmarks that had an obliterator encoded with a number, letter or letters, or a combination of these, to identify the post office of origin. They were introduced in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1843, three years after the first stamp was issued. They became common throughout the nineteenth century but very few remained in use in the twentieth century.

The practice of cancelling a stamp on a letter with a device to prevent reuse and applying alongside, or on the reverse of the article, a dated stamp including the post office name, began in 1840 when postage stamps were introduced in the United Kingdom.

Soon, in many countries, various systems developed where the obliterator had a code identifying the post office of origin. Most such codes were enclosed within a design of dots, rays, bars or concentric circles or ovals to ensure the effective cancellation of the stamp. Similar designs without an enclosed code

are known as dumb or mute obliterated. Later the duplex canceller with the date stamp on the left and the obliterator on the right came into common use.

A duplex canceller was a hand stamp used to cancel postage stamps and imprint a dated postmark applied simultaneously with the one device. The device had a steel die, generally circular, which printed the location of the cancel, together with the time and date of cancel.

A "Skeleton" postmark is a circular date stamp made up from loose metal type, like a John Bull printing set. Skeletons are brought into use, usually for a short period, then returned to 'the PO stores' for reuse.

CDS - Circular Date Stamp

FDI - First Day of Issue postmarks

FDC - First Day Cover, often an illustrated specially printed envelope with stamps postmarked, often with a special postmark, on their first day of issue.

Rubber or Hand (Town) Cancels, applied by rubber stamp by hand at a post office.

Slogan or Spray-on Mechanical Cancels - Automatic cancellations applied to mail during automatic processing. Often used for advertising or events or event national campaigns to use the Postcode or Stay indoors!

Pictorial Postmarks- normally a picture or graphic used to commemorate an occasion or anniversary, often used with FDC.

Final Notes:

Thank you to all of our contributors who have enabled the creation of this edition. To all of our members and their families and friends please look after yourselves, keep safe and well. My challenge to you all is to get creative and send me those articles and we may even get to a fifth edition! As before all errors and mistakes are mine and mine alone so apologies for any made....

Les Ashton-Smith